


good looks

S-E-I
Salon

Infusion Specialist
 A strand by strand method of undetectable extensions
 Non-chemical Highlights

142 W4th St
212-477-5475




Featuring two of Atlanta's Top Hair Designers

Now Specializing in Ethnic Hair & all weaving techniques including the latest hair fashion & trends
 Call for Free Consultation

240 E 13th St
212-533-6613

EPILIGHT LASER

HAIR'S BREADTH AWAY FROM PERFECTION



No one has to know except for the Epilight.

The only laser approved for removal of all hair colors, and skin types. Large areas can be treated in just a few minutes.


BODY SCULPTING CLINIQUE

Visit Our Website www.bodysculptingclinic.com
103 CENTRAL PARK WEST (CORNER of 71ST) • 212-579-5900

The Beach

Salon & Day Spa

"The Beach...has got to be good." VOGUE November 1997



"If you're looking for a place to relax, this is the place. You won't get a better tan anywhere else this summer. Perfect."

112 Christopher St.
New York City
212/924-8551
 Open 7 days a week

Haircuts & Styling
Deep Conditioning
Expert Colorists
Highlights & Perms
Weaves & Extensions

Massage Therapy
Cleansing Facials
Complete Nail Care

Body Waxing
Suntanning

MAGNA American Beds
160W Very Hi Output Lamps
Less than \$7.50 per session.*

VITASUN European Beds
2200W Quartz Lamps
As low as \$13.00 per session.*
Superior tanning without burning.

Experience the difference.

Clean, private rooms. Fresh linens. Scheduled maintenance.

* With Membership & purchase of 25 sessions. Restrictions may apply. Offers subject to change without notice.

STRAIGHT TO HELL

WHEN GAYS GO HETERO,
 THE CONSEQUENCES
 CAN BE ANYTHING BUT REDEMPTIVE
 BY MARK SCHOOFS

Toward hope and healing for homosexuals.



I'm living proof that Truth can set you free.

"Recently, several prominent people like Trent Lott, Reggie White, and Angie and Debbie Winans have spoken out on homosexuality...calling it a sin. When I was living as a lesbian I didn't like hearing words like that...until I realized that God's love was truly meant for me."

The ad above, which ran in *The New York Times*, is part of a \$200,000 campaign by Christian fundamentalists to promote the idea that homosexuality is a choice—a dangerous and depraved one.

Jeffrey Coates just couldn't see a way out. He had spent his entire life trying not to be gay, but it wasn't working. Until he was 29, he had no sex at all. Then, after an encounter with another man, he threw himself into Homosexuals Anonymous and Desert Stream, a fundamentalist ministry that offered an intense, 20-week program to convert homosexuals into heterosexuals. Coates was awarded a certificate for making excellent progress, but, he says, "I felt absolutely no different inside."

After two more years of trying to change, Coates ended up in a desperate bind. "I was taught that suicide was a sin, so I thought there was no way out," he says. He decided to "just hope that God will realize I'm killing myself for the right reasons."

Coates went to a bar, mixed some drinks with pills, then tried to drive home

over the narrow, winding roads of the Hollywood Hills, hoping to crash into the canyon. He kept blacking out at the wheel, swerving into the other lane or out to the edge of the shoulder, but didn't actually crash until he ran into a parked car two blocks from home.

What compelled Coates to try so ardently to "cure" something that is not an illness? His answer seems simple: Raised Baptist in Missouri, the 42-year-old Californian says, "I was taught that homosexuals would go to hell." Ex-gay ministries insist they're not recruiting anyone, but the stories of those who have gone through their programs show that most people enter "conversion therapy" under duress—what some survivors call "psychological terrorism." And the therapy itself can wreak harm, as it did to Coates.

Yet the movement to "heal" gays has suddenly gained media credibility, simply because conservative political groups, such as the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council, shelled out \$200,000 for a high-profile ad campaign. Over the past few weeks, they've run full-page ads in major American dailies featuring former lesbian Anne Paulk, now married to a former drag queen, and a group photo of "ex-gays." A new ad, in *The Miami Herald*, opens with the headline "From innocence to AIDS" and warns of "the physical and spiritual consequences of sin."

These ads are only one salvo in an aggressive political assault on gays timed to the midterm elections. While Trent Lott quips that homosexuals can be compared to alcoholics and kleptomaniacs, congressional Republicans are pushing at least three antigay bills. "Christian groups are reinvigorating their longstanding crusade against homosexuality, but with an unprecedented degree of unity and coordination," concludes *The Washington Post*.

Many of these attacks seem to be backfiring. Gerald Ford, for example, recently warned his party of the dangers of extremism and reaffirmed his support of gay rights. The ex-gay ads portray a kinder, gentler homophobia, but *The New Republic's* Andrew Sullivan smoked the true antigay hate out from behind the rhetoric of Christian love and healing. In a dramatic moment on *Nightline*, Sullivan prodded Janet Folger, who orchestrated the ex-gay ad blitz, to admit that she supports laws that criminalize homosexual sex, allowing gay men and lesbians to be imprisoned for making love even in the privacy of their own homes.

Indeed, the main impetus for the ex-gay ads lies in the polls. According to Gallup, only 13 percent of Americans believed homosexuality was innate in 1977, the year Anita Bryant waged her antigay campaign. But by 1996, that figure had soared to 31 percent. Those same polls show that Americans are more than twice as likely to accept homosexuality if they believe it is innate, like race. "If people believe it's a choice," says CNN commentator William Schneider, "then they aren't going to be as sympathetic." The right is betting that ex-gays will convince Americans homosexuality is a choice—a dangerous and depraved one.

The media have largely focused on the question posed by the ads: Can gays change? The press has certainly cast doubt on whether that's possible, usually by quoting "ex-ex-gays," who say they were able to alter their behavior but not their core desires, and by citing the American Psychological Association, which discourages conversion therapies because there is no credible evidence they work. But what the press has all but overlooked is why anyone would want to change his or her sexual orientation in the first place.

It's a glaring omission, because even the most "successful" ex-gays describe the process as torturous. "Six years of extreme, intense struggle" is how Elaine Sinnard, who runs an ex-gay ministry in Middletown, New York, describes her effort—which she says has worked—to overcome her lesbianism. Some programs try to butch up gay men and femme

down lesbians by taking the men to sporting events and teaching the women how to put on makeup, or by pairing gays with a heterosexual mentor who can teach them conventional gender behavior. Some therapists tell their patients to imagine that the same-sex objects of their desires are diseased, perhaps with AIDS. A group in Memphis, Tennessee, runs a year-long live-in program. Attempts at exorcism—which survivors call emotionally devastating—sometimes occur.

Homophobia is so pervasive that many heterosexuals just assume gays would want to change, and don't think there's anything wrong with asking them to try. As Dave Lemon, a gay Oklahoman who tried for years to become heterosexual, says, "Ask some straight guy to imagine what it would be like if he was told, 'You can't love women and now you're going to have to love a guy.' Tell 'em that, and then they get it."

"I'm not trying to convert homosexuals," says Sinnard, "unless I would try to convert them to God through Jesus Christ. And I would work my head off for that." Of course, proselytizing to homosexuals is de facto recruitment to ex-gay ministries. Indeed, it is almost impossible to comprehend the ex-gay movement without first understanding religious homophobia. True, there is a secular network of "reparative therapists" called the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), but even it has strong religious ties; NARTH cofounder Joseph Nicolosi is a Roman Catholic whose clinic is named after Thomas Aquinas. And most of the larger groups, such as Exodus and Homosexuals Anonymous, are explicitly Christian.

"The nonbeliever has great difficulty understanding [ex-gay ministries], because we are talking about a supernatural transformation that God brings about," says Michael Johnston, the HIV-positive, former homosexual who appeared in the "From innocence to AIDS" ad, and is now president of Kerusso Ministries, a prominent ex-gay organization. Overcoming homosexuality "is not about rational thought or rational discussion," he explains, which is why he dismisses "much of psychology" and the APA's 25-year-old position that homosexuality is not an illness.

Homosexuality is an "abomination," Johnston explains, because in the fullness of time, Jesus the bridegroom will unite with his bride, the church of believers. Even though God has aspects of both masculinity and femininity, and even though "in our glorified bodies there will be no sex," nevertheless marriage between a man and woman is a "picture of the relationship between God and his people." Therefore, he concludes, "a homosexual relationship perverts that [divine] relationship to the greatest possible extent."

The power of religion is such that, to Johnston, this explanation seems absolutely clear and true. Once fundamentalist premises are accepted, there is no way to be gay and remain in God's grace, so shame, guilt, and self-hate follow. Brandon Bauer, now 28, couldn't reconcile being gay with Mormon teachings, so at 17 he tried to kill himself. That's when "therapy" began. A Mormon psychologist assured him he was "under Satan's influence" and that Satan was deceiving him into thinking he couldn't change. He was repeatedly offered electroshock therapy, which he refused. Bauer's parents were told to time his showers so he wouldn't have a chance to masturbate and to remove any kind of magazine "like *GQ*, that might have underwear models." A church bishop gave Bauer a private theological seminar, writing the levels of sin on a blackboard. "He put murder as one step better than homosexuality," Bauer recalls. "He said, 'God could forgive a murderer, but He could never forgive a homosexual.' It haunts me to this day."

Each religious sect [continued on page 58]

good looks

SPECIAL SPARKLES
Braids • Weaves • Twists
Curls • Haircuts • Relaxers
Colors • Press & Curl
Shampoo • Blow Curl • Wet Sets
Dreads • Finger Waves
Ear Piercing • Jewelry & Repairs
Braids done by African artist

57 First Ave.
(Bet. 3rd & 4th St.)
(212) 475-2871 or 1-800-649-7275

Haircutters of Paris
"The Best Work in Manhattan"
Full line of 100% Human Hair at WHOLESALE prices


PERMANENT MAKEUP
• INTERLOCKING
• INDIVIDUAL STRANDS
• BRAIDING
• ORGANIC HAIRCOLOR

HIGHLIGHTS • SPIRAL • PERMS • HAIR RELAXERS •

324 E. 48th St. bet. 1&2 Aves.
759-8160 or 319-3882

Sunday, August 16, 1998

Are you spending
A Day in The Garden?
Goo Goo Dolls and Dishwalla are...



Expert Hairweaving
Licensed • Board Certified
Wear Your Hair Up, Down or Back
Strand By Strand System • Net Weaving
Human Hair Dreadlock Extensions
Wave Nouveau • Relaxers
Weaves • Colorist
Specialized Weaving for Thin Spots
Integrated Units
Human Hair Sales • Custom Blended on
Premises • Professional and Courteous
Staff • Many Satisfied Clients
212-587-5758
One Block From the WTC • open Tue thru Sun

HAIR EXTENSION
For Free
Consultation
ask for Dave
Hony

SPECIALIZING IN:
100%
Human
Hair
Extensions

212-355-5543
895 First Avenue
BETWEEN 5TH & 6TH STREETS
\$89 WITH THIS AD

*"So Trust Me!, This Is The Best Kept Secret
In The Whole Entire World!"*

\$99
Hairweaving

MasterCard VISA

**"Let Your Boyfriend Run
His Fingers Through
Your Hair"**

1-888-609-8082

We also specialize in hair netting

SASHA&GUYS
HAIR SALONS

Latest precision cuts, conditioning
colors, artistic highlights, relaxers
& texturizers & super styling
Our Multi-cultural Salon has a
fully experienced staff artistically
trained to fulfill all of your hair needs.

2nd Anniversary Offer
Free manicure or pedicure with
chemical or extension services
when presenting this ad

**EXPERT
EXTENSIONS**

Manicure or pedicure for walk-in only Tues-Thurs 11am-4pm

Mary Wilson of the Supremes
Hair by Lindsay

2154 B'way (bet 75 & 76th St) (212) 579-0193

Shear Elegance
a sophisticated new hair salon in a fashionable district

Special evening
hair design for all
occasions-weddings,
graduations, proms,
parties & special
gatherings.
.....
Make your
appointment now
.....

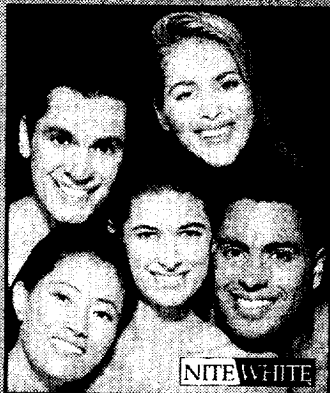
45 Christopher St.
in the West Village
☎ 212-675-9392

Our staff has
been trained at
**The Vidal
Sassoon Academy
in London**

Hair by Larry • Model: Kim Allen



SUMMER WHITE SALE



\$300

for Cosmetic Tooth Bleaching

Mention this ad & get a
**FREE EXAM &
CONSULTATION**
(\$80 value)
offer expires 10/15/98



DR. STEPHEN RAMSAY
General & Cosmetic Dentistry

212-683-2877

Day & Evening Hours

mind/body/spirit

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times

Theosophy
Discussion Group
Thursday Evenings
8:30PM
265 W. 72 St., 2S
for more info. call
(917) 349-6912
All Meetings Free

Bioenergetic Self-Help Center

Offers psychotherapy that
works with the body to
transform your blocks into
stepping stones for personal
growth. Individual,
couples, groups
212-472-9118



The ultimate
mind/body exercise
• for relaxation •
• for health •
• easy-to-learn •
FREE INTRODUCTION
Tuesdays 6-7 pm
The School of Tai Chi Chuan
5 East 17th St • 929-1981

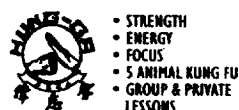
MARTIAL ARTS CONCEPTS FOR WOMEN

FREE INTRODUCTORY
CLASS

A unique Synthesis of Martial Arts designed
ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN
Promotes Physical confidence,
disciplines and peace of mind.
Call today for more information
212-628-6969 or 914-391-9595

STATE OF THE ARTS AGENCY
@ THE TRAINING FLOOR LLC
428 75th STREET NEW YORK, NY

YEE'S HUNG GA KUNG FU ACADEMY TRADITIONAL SHAOLIN



161-05 29th Ave. • Flushing
call 718-352-6987
150 W. 28th St. Suite 600
call 212-366-6569
East Chinatown • 197 Henry St.
call 212-673-1436
Staten Island
call 1-718-668-2478

BEFORE YOU KNOW IT SUMMER WILL BE GONE & SO WILL OUR GREAT MEMBERSHIP PRICE!



PERSONAL TRAINING

IT'S ONLY \$20

PER 1 HR SESSION

CALL NOW FOR YOUR

FREE

WORKOUT TODAY

OFFER EXPIRES
7/31/98

One-on-One PERSONAL TRAINING at our private/semi-private facilities

CALL 212-564-6315

208 W 29th St. (btw 7th & 8th Aves)



body essentials day spa & ayurvedic center

"A sojourn to paradise in Midtown."

-New York Daily News

Gift Certificates and Day Packages Available

stress reduction therapies • aromatherapy facials • massage
therapy • ayurvedic consultations • panchakarma • body wraps &
treatments • reflexology • spa manicures/pedicures
• all-natural products • yoga • qi qong

Kinder...gentler...all natural. The results show. Naturally.

11 West 36th Street, 4th Fl, NY NY 10018 (212) 465-2220

SCHOOLS [continued from page 57]

offers different therapies, but they all paint a distorted and dire portrait of gay life. Bauer recalls being told homosexuality would mean "a life of promiscuity and drug use and really sleazy bars that would be horribly lonely. I would never be loved, because that's impossible between people of same sex." Denied a healthy sexual outlet, Bauer became "like two different people. I wanted to please everyone, to be straight and have kids and be included. Meanwhile the other part of me sneaks out at night and drinks and has sex. I felt like I was having this depressing life, just like they said, so I started to believe them to a certain extent." Bauer has since accepted his homosexuality, but he says conversion therapy scarred him in ways that make it hard for him to maintain relationships.

NARTH, the ostensibly secular psychological organization, deploys a similar hurt-then-heal strategy. "Homosexuality is maladaptive, it's universally maladaptive," asserts NARTH co-founder Joseph Nicolosi. "More pathology and self-destructive behavior is associated with the gay lifestyle," he says, citing cigarette smoking, alcoholism, sadomasochism, failed relationships, "narcissism for the homosexual, borderline personality for the lesbian."

If the rarified religious and psychological rhetoric fails, there's always crotch homophobia: "Our bodies were not made for homosexual sex," says Kerusso Ministry's Johnston. "The anus was not made to be penetrated." Never mind that many heterosexuals practice anal sex, and that many gay men (not to mention lesbians) never do. These are facts any psychologist ought to know, but Nicolosi is practically Johnston's echo: "I think the penis was made for a vagina; I don't think it was made for another man's rectum." Asked if the penis was made for the hand or the mouth, other body parts in which it often finds itself happily ensconced, Nicolosi snaps, "I don't want to get into that."

Despite the extreme pressure, most people who attempt to change their sexuality fail. NARTH and Exodus, the largest Christian ex-gay ministry, both claim "cure" rates of about one third. Exodus offers no scientific backup for its claim, and NARTH offers evidence that is at best flimsy. On its Web page, NARTH quotes ex-gay Alan Medinger as saying, "Years after I had left behind virtually all homosexual attractions, and years after a blessed and pleasurable sexual relationship in my marriage, one factor continued to disturb me. If an attractive man and an attractive woman enter a room, it is the man I will look at first." NARTH counts this man as successfully cured.

Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder, two New York psychologists who are studying the effects of conversion therapies, say they have five out of 150 participants in their study who are happy with their change to a heterosexual life, though all of them still have homosexual desires. Shidlo says, "We want to follow them over the long term," says Shidlo, "because many of our other subjects say they were happy with their change for months or even years, but now look back on that period as a time of not accepting their true desires."

Some ex-gay leaders focus on behavior only. "I don't believe men and women can go into therapy and come out the other end heterosexual," says Johnston. He says that God has changed his own sexual desires from gay to straight but, he insists, "I don't think most of us have experienced that in the long run." To promise a cure is "setting someone up for a great deal of frustration. Christian law is not about eliminating sinful desires, it's about overcoming them."

Thus, the vast majority of people who try to change their sexual orientation can expect years of hardship followed not by a genuine transformation of their erotic attractions but by a suppression of their feelings, what ex-gay

Lemon calls "living a lie."

This tangled web often ensnares other people. At the height of his effort to become straight, Kelly Kirby of Tulsa, Oklahoma, "proposed to three women in six months, and the third one said yes. I didn't have a loving bond with her, in the sense of this is the person I want to spend my life with, but I thought, 'She would make a good wife and this is what I need to do.'" Kirby stayed married for 13 years and had four children before he finally accepted being gay.

His wife had known from the start he was struggling with homosexuality, and now she and his current partner, Rick, get along well and

KELLY KIRBY MET HIS CURRENT PARTNER RICK AT HOMOSEXUALS ANONYMOUS. SUCH GROUPS MAY ACTUALLY ACT AS A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO COME OUT AND ACCEPT THEIR GAYNESS.

all share in raising the four children. So, he says, "I'm hesitant to use the word *victim*, but she thought she had a husband. She watched her life crumble around her, and there are still some permanent scars. I have to accept some responsibility for that, but it never would have happened if I hadn't been involved in these reparative-therapy ministries."

Of course, if Kirby hadn't gone through those ministries, he wouldn't have met his husband, Rick, whom he first encountered at Homosexuals Anonymous. The founders of the Exodus ministry, Michael Bussee and Gary Cooper, also fell in love as they tried to become straight. After declaring their devotion on a flight to an ex-gay convention, Bussee and Cooper arrived at their hotel to find they had been assigned a room with just one bed. They took this as a sign that God wanted them to pursue "a new ministry."

"In a weird way," says Jeffrey Coates, the man who tried to kill himself by driving into the Hollywood canyon, "these ministries actually act as a transition place for many people to come out and accept their gayness." That's why he doesn't regret his experience, even though it cost him so dearly.

Many other ex-ex-gays concur. Kurt Jacobowitz-Kain, a 46-year-old Phoenix man who was celibate for 12 years as he tried to become straight, says the secular gay movement wouldn't have helped him. Ex-gay ministries, however, let him "meet other gay Christians," an experience that was "liberating." Lemon says that by going to Homosexuals Anonymous, "I somehow came to the conclusion that I'm okay, I'm not broken." He laughs. "That wasn't my goal, and it certainly wasn't a goal of the group."

Of course, warns Coates, "Some people don't make the transition to gay life. They either really kill themselves, or act out sexually and infect themselves." Programs such as Evangelicals Concerned, a national fundamentalist gay and lesbian Bible study group, and the network of gay Metropolitan Community Churches, offer much healthier ways to come to terms with being both gay and Christian. But the reality, says Lemon, is that gay men and lesbians deep in fundamentalist Christianity "will flock to ex-gay groups" because that will seem the only way to meet other gay people. But when they get there, he says with a wry chuckle, "They'll find out. Most people are strong enough to see through the whole thing."

Research assistance: Tyler Schnoebelen